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# EVIDENCE GIVEN

BY

JOHN SILLETT,

ON JULY 14, 1848,

BEFORE A COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

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## MEMBERS PRESENT.

The Judge Advocate.  
Mr. F. O'Connor.  
Mr. Sharman Crawford.  
Sir B. Hall.  
Mr. Langston.

Mr. Monsell.  
Captain Pechell.  
Mr. Scholefield.  
Mr. Sullivan.  
Mr. G. Thompson.

THE RIGHT HON. G. W. HAYTER, IN THE CHAIR.

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Mr. F. O'Connor.] Where do you reside? At Kelsale, in Suffolk, near Saxmundham.

What is your present occupation? My present occupation is on the land.

How much land do you occupy? Two acres.

Do you pay any rent for that? No, it is my own.

Did you purchase it? Yes.

What did you give for the two acres? 236*l.*, without expenses.

What do you mean by "without expenses?" Without legal expenses of the conveyance.

What did the two acres stand you in, with the legal expenses? 250*l.*

Was there any house upon it? No.

Is there now? No.

There was not when you bought it? No.

Do you live near the land? It is nearly half a mile from my house; my house is in the village.

And your land is half a mile from the house? Not quite.

Do you rent the house? No, it is my own.

How long is it since you purchased the land? It is six or seven years since I first purchased it.

What was your business before you entered upon the land? I was a grocer and draper.

You were apprenticed to a grocer and draper? Yes; which in the country is a general thing; I was apprenticed to the general trade.

Do you follow that now? No; and I have not done so for the last five years.

When you say you were apprenticed, did you ever carry on this business on your own account? Yes.

Where? At Yoxford, in Suffolk.

Then, from the time you went upon the land till now, have you managed the land yourself, and cultivated it yourself? Yes.

What family have you? I have a wife and two children.

Who cultivates the ground for you? I cultivate it myself.

Would you think that your situation was more advantageous if your house was in the centre of your allotment? Certainly.

Mr. Monsell.] What age are your children? My eldest is between sixteen and seventeen.

Mr. S. Crawford.] Is it a girl or a boy? A girl, and the other is just turned twelve.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] Is that a boy or a girl? A girl.

What assistance have you had upon the land in the course of cultivation? I have never had any; I have always done all the labour myself.

Have your children assisted you in agricultural pursuits at all? Occasionally, in very trifling jobs; all the labour I have always done myself.

Will you state what your system of farming upon that two acres is; your style of cropping? I grow root crops, potatoes, mangel wurzel, cabbages, and beans.\*

Do you grow any corn? Yes, wheat; no other corn but that.

Do you keep any stock? Yes; for four years I kept two cows.

Do you keep any other stock? And two pigs I have generally kept.

Do you keep them still? No, I keep swine instead.

How many pigs have you? I have 17, and the sow.

Do you not count the sow as one? No, that makes 18.

You keep, then, 18 pigs now? Yes, I have altogether 18.

And no cow? No, I am trying an experiment with swine this year.

Is that for the purpose of discovering the difference between the manure of pigs and the manure from cows, or for the profits? For the profits.

Without reference to the manure? I take that into account, considering that manure better than the manure from cows.

Have you supported yourself and family, and clothed yourself and your family out of the two acres? Yes.

Exclusively? Yes.

Have you published an account, to which you can declare, of the profits of land after the consumption and clothing of your family? Yes.

Have you got that with you? No, I have not; it is not out of the press yet.

Did you keep an account of your receipts and expenditure? Yes.

What was the result of your farming; did you live exclusively upon what was produced upon the farm? Yes; I made it a point to do so.

May I ask you whether you lived as well as a farmer as you did as a draper and grocer? I consider I live as well, although in a different way.

As wholesomely? Yes; and much better for my health, I consider.

Without wishing to enter too minutely into your domestic arrangements, will you state pretty nearly how you do live? I always make it a point to have milk of a morning, and meat and vegetables for dinner, and milk at night.

Do you have meat and vegetables every day for dinner? Yes; I make it a point to have meat and vegetables at dinner.

And you have clothed your family out of that two acres? Yes.

What was your object in leaving your profession or calling as a draper and grocer and going on the land? I had always a great taste for the land, and after I had bought this piece of ground I gave my whole attention to it; after I bought it, at first, I was induced to try the experiment to see what I could do on the land, and I found I was getting on better than I expected, and I gave my business up in consequence.

Have you had the land seven years? Yes; it will be about that since I bought it.

You followed your business as a draper and grocer for some time before you went continuously upon the land? Yes; the last five years I have given my attention entirely to the land.

And have abandoned your other business? Yes.

That is, finding your experiment had succeeded better than your former avocations? Yes.

\* And Swede turnips—these I transplant on the same ground where the early potatoes came off; this work should be done in the latter part of July.—J. S.

What state is your land in now, as compared with what it was when you first commenced operations? It is much better.

Looking at the difference of value, if you were going to sell it, if it could be estimated by an unerring standard of value; I am not saying that you gave too much or too little for it; what would you suppose the improvement was worth? The land, when I bought it, was all in pasture, it was old pasture, and I broke it up by degrees, some one year and some another, till I have now got an acre and a half under cultivation, and half an acre in pasture.

The whole of the land is not yet cultivated? There is about half an acre in pasture now.

When you kept those two cows and two pigs, did you rear any calves? Yes.

Up to what age? Seven weeks old; the last I reared this last year.

Had you a yearling heifer? Yes; I reared one and fattened one.

Did you keep an account of what you made of your milk, and the produce of your crops? Yes; I kept an account altogether, and my produce of this last year was 74*l.*

Is that exclusive of the family's living? Yes, I have lived besides; this is the amount of what I have sold.

You sold 74*l.* worth? Yes.

What did you buy? Clothing, and other things besides, for my family.

What are the other expenses which you would deduct from the 74*l.* to leave the profit net? I calculated my expenses as though I was renting the land, and paying rent and taxes for my land, and all those expenses I deduct from this account.

Do you mean from the 74*l.*? Yes.

What would be the expenditure, in rent and taxes, you would deduct from the 74*l.*, the amount of the produce? 51*l.* I think, if I recollect rightly.

Is that after paying the rent and taxes? Yes.

What do you estimate the rent and taxes at of your house and the two acres of land? I estimate the rent at five per cent. interest.

Upon 250*l.*? Yes.

And what the rent of your house? 8*l.* rent.

You put down 20*l.* 10*s.* a year for the rent of house and land? I do not remember to a shilling.

Have you deducted that rent from the 74*l.*? Then there are the taxes to add.

That would be about 2*l.* to make it 51*l.* 10*s.*? Yes.

Do you mean to say that after supplying your family with milk, and bread, and potatoes, and vegetables, you made the 74*l.*? Yes, that is my calculation.

Supplying your family with those things? Yes.

You have deducted about 23*l.* for rent and taxes, which reduces your income to 51*l.* 10*s.* Yes.

What hours do you work at the land? That depends upon the season of the year; when busy I work from six in the morning till six in the evening; when I am not very busy at other times, not so long.

You have not answered my question, what you think is the difference of the value of the land now as compared with what it was when you undertook the management of it; what would you say was the difference in the value? I consider it very much improved since I began it.

Do you find that the land improves annually, or that it gets worse? It improves, of course.

Have you ever tried the plough system upon it; have you ever ploughed it? Never.

Would not that be much cheaper? I have no faith in the plough.

What do you call faith? I know it is not so well for the land.

Do you think your land would not produce as much if cultivated by the plough as it does being cultivated by the spade? I am perfectly satisfied about that; it

would not; I do not use a spade; I cultivate it with a three-pronged fork, fourteen inches long.\*

Do you dig for every crop? Yes.

What means have you of discovering the difference of the cultivation between the spade and the plough, if you have never tried the plough? I do not want to try it; I am satisfied that I am right.

Why? Because I am quite sure the spade is superior to the plough.

Have you compared your crops with the crops of farmers in the neighbourhood cultivating with the plough? Yes.

Which are the best, your crops, taken as a general average, or the crops of the farmers upon the same description of ground? I could give a very good instance of that if any one could see my crop of wheat, and that of my neighbour over the hedge that joins my field.

That is to say, there is wheat over the hedge; the farmer has wheat in a field adjoining yours? Yes.

Which is the best, do you say? I should say that field does not contain more than a half of my crop.

You mean the average per acre? Yes.

What do you average your wheat an acre? My wheat last year produced me sixteen bushels on a quarter of an acre.

Did you measure it? Yes.

Did you measure the quarter of an acre? Yes.

How did you put that wheat in, and when? I dibbled it in rows eight inches apart.

Mr. Sullivan. Do you know what the bushel weighed? It was a Winchester bushel; I did not weigh it.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] Did you sell that wheat? No, I kept it for my family's use.

Did you measure it in bushels? Yes.

And the produce was sixteen bushels? Yes.

How do you say you sowed it, and when? I dibbled it in rows eight inches apart, and then I had it dropped in by boys or girls.

You mean it was dropped in by hand? Yes, by hand.

What was that wheat worth a bushel, in your opinion; have you averaged it? I do not remember.

You have no connexion with the Land Company? No.

None whatever? No.

Have you no knowledge of the Land Company? No; I have read your work. Upon Small Farms? Yes.

Mr. S. Crawford.] You said you dibbled the wheat in rows, eight inches apart, how far apart was each plant in a row? Six inches, as near as I can judge.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] Do you know the quantity of seed you sowed to that quarter of an acre; at what rate per acre? I do not recollect precisely what it was; I sowed it very thin.

You planted potatoes? Yes.

How do you plant the potatoes, whole or cut? Whole.

What system of farming have you taken your knowledge from; what system have you followed? From experience and study.†

Do you find yourself improving in your knowledge of agriculture as your crops grow, and as you practise it yourself? Yes.

Just tell me what was the state of your health and your family's health when

\* I have cultivated my land with the fork these last three years; I find it far superior to the spade. I can dig a greater depth with it and pulverise the soil much better, besides using it with more ease and dispatch.—J. S.

† I have always made it a point to devote all my leisure time to study all works on husbandry that came within my reach; the following is a list of some of them: "British Husbandry," 2 vols; "O'Connor on Small Farms;" "Cobbett's Cottage Economy;" "The Cottage Farmer's Assistant."—J. S.

unconnected with farming operations, as compared with the present? In business I enjoyed very indifferent health indeed; I have had better health since I have been on the land.

How is it with the rest of your family? My family are much better.

You have spoken of two cows and two pigs; of what size and of what description of cows were they? The Suffolk cow; a small cow.

Did you find your land was ample enough to support them, besides the produce you sold; did it keep them in good condition? Yes.

Did you give them as much as they could eat? Yes, I stall-fed them, and used to carry the food to them.

You had two cows and two pigs? Yes.

Will you state what the amount of produce you sold was, and how you sold it; after the consumption of the family, you made 5*l.* 10*s.*? I sold my potatoes at 8*s.* a sack of three bushels; that is how they are sold in our part of the country.

Did you make more than 8*l.* profit on your cow after supplying your family; did it supply the family with butter as well? We generally sell our milk; we make very little butter.

Not taking the consumption of the family, what would you think of the produce of a cow which gave you only 8*l.* a year if you sold all and consumed none? I would not keep such a cow.

What should you think of a man who made such an average; would you have such a man? No.

What was the return you had from the produce of the two cows after supplying your family with milk? I calculated my two cows in the year produced me 29*l.*

Profit over and above the consumption? Yes.

Could you be more than 2*l.* out in that calculation, or do you think you could be 3*l.* out; allowing that you might make an error of 2*l.* or 3*l.* in your calculation? I left the calculation of profits to my wife; she took the account.

Did she return you the money? She paid me the money.

Between you and your wife and the cows, do you think you are within 1*l.* or 2*l.* or 3*l.* over or under, when you say 29*l.*; could you have made much mistake in that? No, I am sure I could not.

Mr. S. *Crawford.*] Was that made by the sale of the milk? Yes.

Mr. F. *O'Connor.*] What did you get for it? Twopence a quart.

At what time did your cows calve? In the spring or summer.

Did you ever measure the milk when they were milked, when they were flush of milk? No.

What was the average they would give the first three or four months? From two to three gallons each.

Mr. S. *Crawford.* Is that at a milking, or in a day? From two or three gallons a meal when they are in full profit.

Mr. F. *O'Connor.*] You would not keep a cow that would only give you 8*l.* a year? Certainly not.

How often do you milk them in a day? Morning and night.

Why did you not milk them three times a day? I never tried that.

Have you worked your cows at all in a cart or light plough? No; I have never worked them.

What would you think of the knowledge and experience of a gentleman, a professional farmer, who says that no labouring man can keep and support his family upon the produce of the three best acres of land in England, paying neither rent, rates, nor taxes? I can only answer for myself that I have done it. I have lived the last five years off my land, and I can give any references that you may require from some of the most respectable people living in the neighbourhood.

You can give respectable references as to the accuracy of your account of your farm? Yes.

What would you take now for your two acres of land, apart from the house, which without the house you say cost you 250*l.*; suppose you were going to sell

it, what would you expect to be the fair marketable value? I could not expect the money I gave for it, perhaps, in the real value of the land.

If it were sold, looking at the comparative value of the land then and now, how would you estimate the real value of the land now? It is better now than when I bought it.\*

Then it is better land than when you bought it? Yes.

Have you ever measured or weighed any portion of the potatoes grown upon any part of the ground? Yes.

State what is the result of that, if you please? I have grown as much as three bushels to a rod.

Do you mean by a rod a perch? Yes; a square perch.

That is  $16\frac{1}{2}$  square feet? Yes.

Three bushels? Yes.

That is 480 bushels to the acre? Yes.

Have you measured them? Yes; that is three bushels to the square rod.

Mr. Sullivan.] How much does a bushel of potatoes weigh? About 72 pounds, I think; in Suffolk they calculate a sack to weigh 14 stone.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] It is by measure; in produce it is three bushels off a rod? Yes, or a sack to the rod; it is the same thing; they are always sold by the sack.

Mr. S. Crawford.] When you measure by the bushel do you heap the bushel? Yes, we heap it.

Do you do it or your wife? I always attend to it myself.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] Have you sold vegetables as well? Yes.

What description do you find most profitable? Cabbages are what I generally grow upon a large scale.

After five years' close application and experience, and after seven years being employed partially in both business and agricultural pursuits, what amount of money, to be paid weekly, would you take to abandon your two acres and not get any more land and go back to your former business; that is, what weekly salary would you take for your land? If I gave up my land I should want a competency.

What salary, per week, would you now accept to give up the land altogether? I would not accept, I might say, scarcely any salary to leave my land to go to business, as I very much prefer the land.

What would you accept as weekly wages to give it up? Upon my word I can scarcely say.

I say to go back to your old business as a draper and a grocer, what amount of profit, not putting it as a question of wages, would you be satisfied to be insured to make a profit of your labour as a draper and grocer to give up the land? I should not be willing to accept less than 3*l.* a week.

Would you take 3*l.* a week to-morrow and leave the land altogether? No.

You would not? Certainly not.

That is after five years' experience? Yes.

After your experience, do you think a man can pay 10*l.* or 12*l.* a year; I will not put it down at for two acres of land with a cottage and the necessary outbuildings in the centre of his allotment; that is, do you think he can maintain his family and pay the rent for his house and land? I must beg to observe that must depend upon the size of the family, upon the number of children; I would not presume that a man with two acres of land could support a large family.

You have four in your family? Two children.

There are four in the family? Yes.

The average is estimated at five to a family; that is three children and the man and wife; do you think that a man with his wife and three children could pay a

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\* I find from my continued digging it a good depth with my fork fourteen inches long, that it is every year much improving, and from the quantity of manure that I make from my stock I am enabled to keep it in a high state of cultivation.—J. S.



rent of 12*l.* for two acres and a house in the centre of his allotment, and live? Yes, if it is good land and he is an industrious man.

If it is good land he would pay more rent for it, and if bad he would make it better; if it is good land, you think he could pay rent and support his family? If he is a man that is frugal and industrious, he could.

You pay 20*l.* a year for two acres and your house, which is not upon your allotment, and you make 51*l.* a year; you pay 20*l.* for your two acres? According to the purchase money I do.

The value of anything is what it will bring, and that is the rent you have subjected yourself to? Yes.

The Committee are distinctly to understand that you have four in family, and that you make 51*l.* 10*s.* the two acres profit; is not it so? Yes, that is my calculation I made last year.

Then do you not think if another man is as industrious as you, that he can also come to the same result? I do not see why he should not.

Mr. S. Crawford.] You said you considered cabbages the most profitable crop? Yes, I believe when I get a full crop of cabbages that I realise more money than by any other crop; the price I have made of them is a halfpenny a head.

Where have you sold them? The market people, coming with their carts, come and take a quantity.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] You sell them wholesale? Yes.

Mr. S. Crawford.] Is there any large town near you to take them to? Yes, within a few miles.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] How far are you from a market town? One mile from Saxmundham.

What size is Saxmundham; what is the population? It is not a very large town.

Is it a town or a village? A market town.

What proportion do you sell in Saxmundham? I send none to the town; I sell them wholesale.

Where do you sell the milk? The people in the village come for it.

You do not send it out at all? No, I do not send it out.

Do you find, from your mode of culture, you have an abundance of manure for your farm? Yes, by keeping my stock stall-fed \*

Did you buy the 17 pigs, or rear them? I reared them; they are all of different ages. I have two now fatted fit to kill, and four large stores; I have 11 now fit to take from the sow, now weaning.

Have 18 pigs been exclusively fed from the produce of the farm?—Yes.

What do you estimate their value at now?—I could not tell precisely their value.

What other crops have you on your farm now, at this present moment?—A quarter of an acre of wheat. The system I pursue is growing beans and potatoes.

Beans between the potatoes?—Yes.

What else have you besides beans and potatoes; but first, how much potatoes have you?—I have never measured how much I have under cultivation of potatoes this year; I was going to say I have a crop of mangel wurzel and beans.

About how much?—I suppose about 30 rods.

What other crops have you?—The drumhead cabbages.

About how much?—I suppose about 20 rods perhaps, or not so much.

And you have half an acre of pasture?—About that.

What do you do with the half acre of pasture?—I have this year mown it, and made it into hay to sell.

Do you give any of the manure to the pasture?—The liquid manure.

Have you a tank?—Yes.

When do you put it on?—In the winter season.

Do you scarify it before you put on the liquid manure?—No.

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\* Stall-feeding is a system I would strongly recommend, both for the economy of feeding and for the abundance of manure that is made.—J. S.

Have you found the following of my farming work well?—I have gathered information from it.

Have you planted the crops according to the system I have laid down?—In many respects I have.

Have you found that succeed? Yes.

Have you followed out my system of planting throughout?—No; my plan is to dibble them in; I find that answer very well.

And you plant them whole instead of cutting them? Yes.

Do you find yours to be better than your neighbours? They are looking exceedingly well this year.

What produce do you expect from the crop of wheat if nothing happens to it; is it as good as before? Very competent judges have calculated that I shall have quite as much as I had last year.

When you speak of competent judges, who do you mean?—Gentlemen and farmers who have looked round the farm.

Do they estimate it as high an amount as you have done when you say you had 16 bushels to a quarter of an acre? Yes.

What would you average an acre of potatoes to produce upon the best land?—The good land ought to produce what I have stated.

Four hundred and eighty bushels? Yes.

You do not think that an over crop? No; it is not at all an unusual thing to get three bushels off one rod.

What would you say to the estimate of one bushel and a half to the rod for the best land in England? I must beg to say a great deal depends upon the season.

An average crop? Yes.

*Chairman.*] And it depends upon the cultivation? Yes.\*

*Mr. F. O'Connor.*] According to your cultivation you have had what you have stated? Yes.

What would you think if upon your quarter of an acre you had six bushels of wheat instead of 16? I should not be satisfied with it.

Would you have wheat any more if you could not produce more than six bushels off a quarter of an acre instead of sixteen? No; I do not grow it, because I consider it the most profitable crop; but for my family's consumption, and for the straw for the stock.

It is not the most profitable crop? No.

*Mr. S. Crawford.*] I want to know in what way you prepare the ground for the potatoes. I think you say you dibble them in? First the manure is well spread all over, and I dig it in with the fork; then I draw my lines; I have a driller that I have formed for the purpose, to draw the lines instead of drilling them separately, about 20 inches apart, and then I dibble my potatoes in the holes, being about 12 inches apart in the rows, and about six to seven inches deep.

*Mr. F. O'Connor.*] How would you estimate the value of your land; would you say it was the best land in England or land of a middling quality, or what description of land was it when you took it? I considered my land to be good when I took it, because it was in pasture.

Would you say it was the best land in England? It is considered to be good land, a nice mixed soil.†

*Mr. S. Crawford.*] After the potatoes come up, do you mould them up? No. If you wish to know my system I can tell it you.

Yes, I wish to know it? In growing my potatoes, between every third row I grow a double row of beans, without allowing any extra room for the potatoes, and I find in that way I get an excellent crop of beans; judges have seen my crop

\* The weight of a crop depends principally upon the quality of the land, the cultivation, and an abundant supply of manure.—J. S.

† But not the best land in England; some part of it is a heavy stubborn soil.—J. S.

this year, and have calculated that I shall have as many beans as though the ground were covered, and it will not injure the potatoes.

You do not earth the potatoes up? No; in consequence of growing the beans I cannot earth them; I put the potatoes in a good depth.

How deep did you say you put them in? From six to seven inches I put them in.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] You put the beans between the drills, between every third row? Yes.

Do you think you have as much potatoes as you would have if you had not planted the beans? Yes, I proved that last year.

Then, in fact, you think that a sow would feed 16 pigs as well as eight pigs, and that it does not signify how many pigs are pulling at the sow; if you consider that, it does not signify how much seed is pulling at the land. Do you know that the land critically represents either the sow or a cow giving milk? Yes.

Do you know then that if you encumber the land with too much seed it is precisely the same as if you allow an immense litter of pigs to suck a sow? Yes.

Are you not aware that the land will not give you as good a crop of potatoes as if you did not plant any beans? I believe it will.

Do the beans take none of the nutriment out of the land? Yes, of course.

And would not the potatoes get that nutriment if the beans were not there? If it is in heart, and thorough good land, it will produce both.

Then there would be no end of produce in that case? I can only say what I have proved from my experiments.

Would your land have given those two crops as luxuriantly when you first commenced operations as now? No; in breaking up pasture land, the first year you cannot expect a crop like the two or three following years.

What would you say of the knowledge of a professional gentleman who prefers the plough cultivation to the spade cultivation, and says you would have larger crops if the land were ploughed? I should presume that that gentleman never tried the spade at all; of course he cannot have tried it.\*

If a neighbouring farmer offered to come in and plough your ground for you for nothing, would you allow him to do so? No.

Have you read, in an Oxford paper, an account of Samuel Bridges' operations? Yes, I have read it in your work.

Taken from an Oxford paper? From the Labourer's Friend Magazine.

What was the result of his experiment upon four acres of land? From this account I have read——

Mr. Monsell.] Did you see the farm? No.

Mr. Sullivan.] Were the potatoes you cultivated with the beans an early crop or not? Yes, they were.

What were they? What we call the early shaw.

What time were they put in the ground? In March.

\* SPADE HUSBANDRY.—“To prove the possibility of it by the use of the spade, various statements have been made showing the superiority of the crops thus produced over those grown by the plough. This, indeed, hardly needs any elucidation to the farmer, for he must be well convinced of the advantages of garden culture beyond that carried on in the fields, as by it the ground can be dug twice as deep as it is generally stirred by the plough; thereby rendering it pervious to the roots of plants, which thus draw more nourishment from the soil. It is also more effectually worked—that is to say, the clods are broken and intermixed, and the land is thus rendered more friable and mellow than can be effected by a common fallow; the treading of horses, too, which is so injurious to cays, is avoided; as well as the constant recurrence of the pressure of the ploughshare, which eventually causes in some land a hard surface upon the subsoil—thus constituting what is called “the pan” which in tough soils prevents the escape of water, and holds the upper stratum in a wet, cold, and unprofitable condition.”—*British Husbandry*, 2nd Vol. pages 569 and 570.

What time were they dug out? In July.

What do you put in the place of those potatoes? I put on a crop of transplanted Swede turnips.

Where the potatoes were? Yes.

Still leaving the beans? Yes, they do not interfere at all.

Then you calculate that instead of two crops you make the ground produce three in the year? Yes, I have done so by transplanting; I could not do it otherwise; I raise the Swede turnips just the same as cabbage plants, and when the potatoes come off, I dig the land over and transplant them the same as the cabbages.

Do you consider that system of transplanting as profitable in point of weight as if you sowed it from the seed? It depends very much upon the season; if it is a moist season I have got an excellent crop; if it is a season like last year where we had little or no rain they will suffer: last summer I transplanted a great many; but in consequence of the dryness of the season I could get no weight from the crop.

Do you sow any peas? No, they will not answer the purpose; I tried them one year between the potatoes; but they shade the potatoes too much.

Mr. Monsell.] Do you employ any labourers on your farm? No; I have never employed any labourers.

You have done the whole work yourself? Yes.

Do you ever use any food for your stock that is not grown on the farm? No.\*

Do you use any manure not made on your farm? No, I have never bought any manure; I have found that I have always made plenty.

Mr. S. Crawford.] At what distance do you put the turnips in a row? The transplanted Swedes.

Yes? The same distance as the potatoes, 20 inches.

In the row? About 12 inches.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] I find that your produce, if measured by bushels, amounts to 15 tons 8 cwt. 8lbs. to the acre? Yes.

Then I was rather wrong when I said a bushel and a half. Suppose instead of three bushels, you had one bushel, and a little more, upon the rod, would you cultivate potatoes any more if you could not get more than that? No.

Mr. S. Crawford.] Now that you have no cow, and keep pigs in place of cows, do you buy milk for your consumption? Yes; I always prefer milk, and now I have not a cow, I buy.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] Then you would deduct that in your calculations the next year, and put down less what you gave for milk? Yes.

And carry the profit of the pigs forward as your profit? Yes.

Mr. S. Crawford.] What do you do with the pasture field when you do not keep a cow? I make it into hay and sell it; in fact, I intend to break up all my pasture this next winter.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] Will your two acres produce you more when the other half acre, which is now in pasture, is brought into cultivation? Yes; now I have not my cows, I intend to break up the other portion of it.

Do you think your 17 pigs and your sow will produce you as much profit as your two cows and your two pigs produced? I am this year trying the experiment. I have been told by many intelligent people that a breeding sow will make as much profit as a cow, if it will, it will save labour and trouble.

Both in cooking the food and everything else? Yes.

What do you feed your pigs upon? I am now feeding them on the tops of the beans, of which I have got a great quantity, and I feed them also with the leaves of the mangel wurzel.

Mr. S. Crawford.] Do they get nothing else? When I fatten them, of course.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] What do you finish them with? Then I feed them on boiled

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\* Except when I am fattening my pigs. I am this year, (1848,) selling my early potatoes and other vegetables to buy barley-meal to finish them off.—J. S.

potatoes, and then I buy a little barley meal to finish them up with, the last week or two.

When they become stores you give them boiled potatoes to fatten them? Yes.

And barley meal to finish them off? Yes.

Sir B. Hall.] You stated, I think, that after supplying the family, you got a profit of 29*l.* from the two cows in the year? Yes; that is the calculation I made.

What quantity of milk, per day, do you apprehend will be consumed in the family? I suppose our family would consume about a quart.

What do you reckon would be a fair average for milk for a cow to give per day? That would depend upon whether the cow is in full profit or not.

What quantity of milk do you apprehend a good cow, a fair cow, such as those you had, would give per day? A good cow would give, when in full profit, from two to three gallons a meal in the morning, and the same quantity at night.

For what length of time do you reckon a cow would give that? From three to four months, I should think a good cow would do that.

And how long do you consider that the cow remains in milking? A good cow would remain in milking within four weeks of her calving; that is what I have generally allowed my cows.

Taking the whole year, that is, taking the time that the cow is in full milking, and the time that she is in indifferent milking, and the time of year when she is not in milking at all, would you reckon that the cow would give more than three gallons a day? It would depend entirely upon the description of cow, and as to the size.

The question refers to the description of cow that you have been speaking to? I never found one that would give more than that.

Mr. S. Crawford.] Do you mean that the average, taking all the circumstances into consideration, would be two or three gallons a day? No, not the average of the year; you could calculate that quantity only from three to four months in the year.

Sir B. Hall.] I wish you distinctly to understand the question I put to you, which is this: "Taking the whole year, that is, taking the time that the cow is in full milking, and the time that she is in indifferent milking, and the time of year when she is not in milking at all, would you reckon that the cow would give more than three gallons a day?" I should suppose that for three months she would give five gallons; I should suppose that the cow, after the three months, would fall perhaps the next month a gallon, and then probably she will decrease gradually perhaps half a gallon, and then I should suppose, that from the period of her being dry, she would give about a gallon at a meal.

Chairman.] In the worst time about a gallon a day? Yes; that is previous to calving.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] Do you mean a gallon a day, or a gallon a meal? A gallon a day, calculating up to the time of her growing dry; a month or five weeks before calving.

In the profit you have given of your cows, do you know whether you have estimated the cows to give every day through the year five quarts a day; that is, two quarts and a pint a meal? Yes.

You say you have sold the milk at 1*d.* a pint, that is 2*d.* a quart? Yes.

That is 10*d.* a day? Yes.

And 10*d.* a day is little better than 15*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* a year; and you have estimated with the calf that the profit was 29*l.* odd, and you have estimated the produce of your milk, in the profit you have given, at under five quarts a day? Yes.

Sir B. Hall.] Then do you calculate that taking the year through, from the first day of the year to the last day of the year, subject to all those variations in the quantity of the milk produced, that a cow gives on an average two and a half gallons a day? As near as I could calculate, I should suppose she would.

Do the 29*l.* which you say you got from the cows include any profit derivable from the sale of the calves, or am I to understand you that it is for the sale of the milk? For the sale of the milk.

The 29% is for the sale of the milk, exclusive of any profit from the sale of calves? Yes.

You have stated that your cows produce on the average of the year  $2\frac{1}{2}$  gallons a day, and you have stated that your family consume on an average a quart a day, and that you have derived a profit of 29% by the sale of the milk; you must therefore have sold, as I apprehend, 3,480 quarts, and that, added to 365 quarts, the quantity consumed in your family, would leave you a quantity of 3,845 quarts; is that the case? I have never taken an exact account of it by measure; it is as near as I could calculate it.

Then you have made no calculation of that kind? No, it is impossible; I could not do that, because the way we have kept the account, is how much we have made in a week by the sale of our milk; in the winter we have made a little butter; we do not sell all our milk in the winter.

I understood you to say that the 29% was for the sale of milk? The sale of the produce of the cow, not the milk.

Besides what you consumed? Yes.

Then, if you use a quart a day in your family, and also make butter, and if you sell milk to the amount of 29%, I believe you will find, on a very simple calculation, that you must have 3,845 quarts of milk in the year? I do not know how that may be; I never made any exact calculation of that kind, otherwise than the weekly calculation of what my wife marks on the slate, of what she has sold.

Then if I am right in my calculation that you get 3,845 quarts from those two cows, it would appear that you have 961 gallons from them; is that likely to be the case? I have never measured the milk; I tell you as well as I can to the best of my knowledge; we never measured our milk.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] I think I can relieve the committee and yourself of all these nice calculations; you say your cows for from three to four months give from two to three gallons at a meal, when in full profit? As near as I could calculate.

Do they give milk on Sundays? Yes.

Then if they give, taking the average of 10 quarts a meal, which is between two and three gallons, that is 20 quarts a day for a cow? Yes.

Then if you multiply the 20 quarts a day by the seven days in the week, you have 140 quarts a week, have you not? Yes.

Then if you multiply that by the three months only, not from three to four months but 13 weeks, the quarter of the year she is in full profit, in that quarter of the year she will give you 1,820 quarts of milk? Yes.

And if you reduce that to money, at 2d. a quart, that is 15l. 3s. 4d. for the three months, throwing the rest of the year overboard altogether? Yes.

You have charged for the calves in that 29% odd? No, the fattening of one calf is not included.

Do you mean that all the year round the cow gives  $2\frac{1}{2}$  gallons at a meal? No, I never measured the milk; I stated that the cow, in full profit, at a meal, morning and night, gave  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in the morning and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  at night.

Sir B. Hall.] The question I asked you was this: taking into consideration what the cow gave when she was in full milking, and taking into consideration what she gave when she was in indifferent milking, and taking the time of the year in which she was not in milking at all, what quantity she would be likely to give from the commencement of the year to the close of the year; and you stated in answer to that question that she would give  $2\frac{1}{2}$  gallons a day, taking the whole year round? I could not give any other than a completely random calculation; I never kept any account of the measure, and therefore it is impossible to give any precise answer to that.

Mr. Monsell.] Did I understand you to say, in your neighbourhood the milk sold at the same price in winter as in summer? Yes, we always sell it at the same price.

Mr. F. O'Connor.] Do you agree to supply people with it? It is the custom; we never charge more in winter than in summer.

Have you, in fact, any doubt upon your mind, that after supplying your family with the produce of the farm, and paying the rent and taxes, you have made from 51*l.* 10*s.* profit? Yes.

Do you expect to make more or less this year? I expect to make quite as much; I have had gentlemen looking over the crops competent to judge.

Do people come to look at your crops? Yes; many people come to look at them.

Mr. *Scholefield*.] I understand you to say you get between 50*l.* and 60*l.* a year, over and above what your family consume, by means of your farm? Yes.

Is that calculation founded upon the average, or is it the result of any one particular year? This is an account I have kept this last year.

Then do you consider it to have been a very good year, or an indifferent year, or a bad year? It was considered to be very favourable last year.

Then the average of years would be very different? That I could not say anything about.

If this has been a very favourable year, there must have been many years that have been much worse, and therefore, looking at the average, would not that cause a comparatively large surplus to be shown this last year which will not be shown on the average of years? That would depend a great deal upon the season.

Have you made any calculation whatever as to the average result of your farming operations for the last five years? I have never kept any accurate account of that.

Have you kept any account for the present year? No; I can give no account of this year till the end of the year.

Take two or three years back; have you made any calculation of any year except the one you have now given the Committee the result of? Not precisely, so as to know of any precise amount.

Have you made any approximate estimate? I calculated the year before this last, as near as I could calculate, that there was between 50*l.* and 60*l.*

That was about the same as last year? Yes.

That was also a favourable season? Yes.

Have you made any calculation whatever applicable to a bad year? No; I have never kept any account at all previously to that.

Mr. *Sullivan*.] You say you are publishing a work, which is in the press at present? Yes.

Does that give a detailed account of all the profits of the farm? Yes.

And is not that account spread over five years? No; that is only an account of this last year.

You do not give in the work now in the press the benefit of your experience to the public for the last five years? It does in the operations of the farming; it gives an account of my operations in farming for the five years.

Not the amount of the produce raised? No.

Mr. *F. O'Connor*.] Would you think that it would be much more beneficial to you if the house were in the centre of the allotment instead of being half a mile off, as it is? Yes, of course; I find it very inconvenient.

You estimate the rent of the house at 8*l.*? Yes.

And you put 12*l.* 10*s.* for interest upon the land? Yes.

That is 20*l.* 10*s.*? Yes.

How much are the rates and taxes? I think between 2*l.* and 3*l.*

And over and above the rates and taxes, and rent, you have made 51*l.* 10*s.*? Yes.

Mr. *S. Crawford*.] You said as to pigs, that you feed them upon mangel wurzel leaves? Yes.

And other matters of that kind? Yes.

Except those that were fattening, to which you gave potatoes, and towards the close barley meal? Yes; always previous to killing them, for two or three weeks.

Do you find that vegetable food, such as mangel wurzel leaves, is sufficient for

the pigs you are rearing, without any other food? Yes; the store pigs; I do not give any corn.

Do you give all your pigs potatoes? No, not the store pigs.

But those that are not fattening what are they fed upon? The tops of my beans, and the leaves of the mangel wurzel.

You found those things sufficient to nourish the pigs in that state? Yes; and I gave them cabbages as well.

Do you give them those cabbages boiled or raw? Raw.

And the sow, when the young pigs are sucking, what do you feed her upon? That would be better explained if you saw my work; I have explained the whole of my system, and how I feed them, there.

You give her some better feeding than the others? Yes, during the time she is suckling the pigs.

Captain *Pechell*.] Was there any wall round your land at the time you purchased it? No; it was only a plain field.

What sort of a fence was there round it? A hawthorn fence.

What has it now? The same.

Are any other allotments or land cultivated in the same way adjoining it? No; this field of mine joins the clergyman's of the village.

Mr. *F. O'Connor*.] Are you and the clergyman on good terms? Yes; he often comes and looks over my land.

Captain *Pechell*.] Your cows which you have been speaking of, were they of any particular breed? The Suffolk breed.

Did you purchase them from the National Land Company? No.

From whom did you purchase the cows, and where did the person live from whom you purchased them? I purchased them in the county where I live, at an auction.

Where? In Suffolk.

Suffolk is a wide place; cannot you tell the Committee where you purchased the cows? At an auction.

That is the matter. You are now asked from where you purchased them; from what place or town? At Leiston, and I can give you the gentleman's name, if you require it; it was Mr. Whitmore, farmer.

Mr. *S. Crauford*.] Do you sell any straw off your land? No.

Do you convert it all into manure? Yes.

*Now ready, Nos. 19, 20, Price One Shilling,*

OF

## THE LABOURER MAGAZINE,

CONTAINING

AN ABSTRACT OF THE

EVIDENCE TAKEN BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO

## THE NATIONAL LAND COMPANY.



# WHAT MAY BE DONE WITH THREE ACRES OF LAND,

EXPLAINED IN THE FOLLOWING LETTER,

BY

FEARGUS O'CONNOR, ESQ. M.P.

(Price 2s. per 100, or 1Ss. per 1000.)

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

A person who signs himself a "Well-wisher and a Shopkeeper of Plymouth," writes me a very respectful and encouraging letter, in which he states, "that all that is required to convince him, and many of his class, of the practicability of the Land Plan, is the want of some clear and simple informatioo, as to the capability of occupants of so small a quantity as even four acres to live and pay rent;" and he adds, "if this subject is not bencath your consideration, or too complicated for dissection, your answer will, I know, be hailed by thousands, who are now doubtful upon this point only."

The subject is neithcr beneath my consideration, nor is it too complicated for dissection, and the question being put, I will write you a letter that neither can be, nor ever will be, answered. I will take three acres for consideration, that being the mean; and what I state three acres will do, two will do, as I am going to place it before you in the roughest aspect of husbandry, stating the lowest price for produce to be sold, and the most extravagao for outgoings. My statement shall be just as simple as my friend, or the most ignorant of the subject, could desire to have:—

## DISPOSITION OF THREE ACRES.

	A.	R.
Potatoes .. .. .	1	0
Wheat .. .. .	1	0
Cropped with cabbages, mangcl wurtzel, turnips, tares, clover, and flax .. .. .	0	3½
Kitchen-garden .. .. .	0	½
Acres .. .. .	3	0
<hr/>		
Produce of acre of potatoes .. .. .	15	tons
.. .. . wheat .. .. .	200	stones
For growing stuff for cows .. .. .	2½	roods
For flax .. .. .	1	rood
For kitchen-garden .. .. .	½	a rood

## DISPOSAL OF PRODUCE.

- For cows—from November to March, 2 tons of potatoes or nearly one and a half stone each per day.
- For family—1 and a half tons of potatoes, or about 9 lbs. per day.
- For six fattig pigs—from November to March, 8 tons of potatoes, or nearly 2 stone each per day.
- For sale—3½ tons of potatoes.
- Do. Milk of two cows.
- Do. 100 stones of wheat.
- Do. Produce of ¼ of an acre of flax, pounded, seurchcd, heckled, and spun by the family, during the winter.
- Do. 4 bacon pigs in March.

# PRICES OF PRODUCE.

Milk of 2 cows; at 8 quarts a-day each, 16 quarts, at 1½d. per quart. .. ..	£. s. d.
4 bacon pigs in March .. ..	36 10 0
100 stones of wheat, at 1s. 6d. per stone .. ..	20 0 0
3 and a half tons of potatoes, at 6d. per stone .. ..	7 10 0
Price of ½ of an acre of flax, spun .. ..	14 0 0
Fruit and vegetables .. ..	12 10 0
	5 0 0
	<u>£95 10 0</u>

## PRODUCE RESERVED FOR FAMILY'S CONSUMPTION.

2 bacon pigs, 3 cwt. each. 6 cwt.  
1½ tons of potatoes  
100 stones of wheat.  
Produce of 6 ducks.  
Fruit and vegetables.  
2 hives of honey.

## ANNUAL ALLOWANCE REDUCED TO WEEKLY CONSUMPTION.

14 pounds of bacon.  
1½ stone of flour.  
4½ stones of potatoes.  
20 duck eggs.  
2 pounds of honey.  
Fruit and vegetables.

## ANNUAL EXPENDITURE.

Rent, rates and taxes .. ..	£. s. d.
Two tons of best hay for cows, from Dec. to March .. ..	13 10 0
Clothing man, wife, and three children .. ..	8 0 0
Fuel, soap, and candles .. ..	15 0 0
Repairing implements .. ..	8 0 0
Six pigs in May .. ..	1 0 0
	6 0 0
	<u>£51 10 0</u>
From price of produce .. ..	£95 10 0
Deduct expenditure .. ..	<u>£51 10 0</u>

And there remains, £44 0 0  
per annum, after consumption, and the best of good living.

I will now estimate at a low rate the value of the allowances for weekly living—

14lbs. of bacon, the best, at 6d. per lb. .. ..	s. d.
1½ stone of flour, at 2s. 6d. .. ..	7 0
4½ stones of potatoes at 6d. per stone .. ..	3 9
20 duck eggs .. ..	2 3
2 lbs. of honey .. ..	1 6
Fruit and vegetables .. ..	1 6
	1 0
	<u>17 0</u>

This does not include rent, fuel, soap, candles, and clothing.

# EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

Planting acre of potatoes	..	..	24 days
Digging do.	..	..	24 "
Dibbling wheat with family	..	..	8 "
Reaping do.	..	..	4 "
Threshing do.	..	..	13 "
Putting out manure	..	..	2 "
Cleaning wheat and taking to market	..	..	2 "
Prepared ground and sowing flax	..	..	10 "
Engaged on acre, not under wheat or potatoes, but producing flax, and uangel wurtzel, cabbages, tares and turnips, and in kitchen garden	..	..	70 "

Total number of days employed .. .. 157

Total amount received in living, clothing, fuel, candles, and bay, and not including rent of house, for 157 days' work, £75 12s., or nearly 10s. per day, and not allowing for each year's improvement in the land.

Now, I have laid down the meanest and rudest system of cultivation. I have allowed eight tons of potatoes, worth £32, to produce only £24 when given to pigs; I have allowed £8 worth of hay and £8 worth of potatoes for two cows; besides the produce of nearly an acre, cropped and re-cropped in spring and summer; for, observe, the flax is sown in February and pulled in June, and clover is sown with it, and is fit to cut in a month after the flax is drawn. So that you have two tons of hay, two tons of potatoes, and the produce of nearly an acre, to feed two cows; while Cobbett has proved that a quarter of an acre will feed a cow the whole year round. I have taken the milk at the price of butter, so cheap that you cannot fail to get that price in butter or pork. I have said fifteen tons of potatoes, but it is no crop. Mr Baines, of the "Leeds Mercury," states, I think, over fifteen tons as a fair crop, but he underrates; twenty tons is no great crop. I have stated 200 stones of wheat, while, on middling land and without care, I have had 240 stones; you will have 300 stones and more, when you watch every plant and never allow a weed to grow in it. I have allowed nothing for seed, as every man will save his own; and sell some. I have recommended ducks, because a wall a foot high will keep them in, and because hens are very bad farmers and ducks are very good ones, they will follow you out to the field, and will gobble up the slugs and worms and never require more. You will have all the small wheat, after you clean your wheat for sale, to finish off YOUR OWN TWO PIGS, and you will have twenty stones of bran from the 100 stones you grind to give those for sale, besides milk, if you make butter. You must buy six young pigs in May, when milk, cabbage, tares, and refuse are plenty, and feed them that way, and from the offal of the house, till November, when you shut them up. You will give £1 each in May and get £5 each in March, when fat. You will make much more than £12 of your flax besides the seed, which is the finest thing you could have for your new-calved cows.

I allow your hives of honey to weigh 52 pounds each, and your ducks to lay three days in the week, SUNDAYS INCLUDED, as my ducks never made any difference, and my cows gave milk, but my horses DIDN'T WORK AND ATE. I allow each man to keep a donkey, which he would find useful, and could easily feed upon what the cows left, and pickings about the door, and be fat; he would earn two rents, if you fed him well. I leave 2 cows, 6 pigs, a donkey, 6 ducks, and a drake, with the family, to supply manure, and two tons of hay brought to the farm, and an acre of wheat straw; and the reason why I give the potatoes to cows and pigs, and lose by them is, because, only for the cows and pigs, I could not have them at all. You should consume all you could upon the farm. Of all things you must hear in mind that not a weed will ever be seen in the land, and that every plant will have the OWNER'S watchful eye over it; and that the usual mode of culture bears no more comparison to what

yours will be, that an uneducated person does to a good scholar. Now I have allowed you 17 shillings' worth of food at wholesale price and good, and for which you would pay 22 shillings and more, and not so good, in the retail market, besides going for it; and I have shown you a profit of £44 after THAT LIVING and house rent, for 157 days' work.

And now I will show you how much I am under the mark, even according to the old system. For instance, a farmer rents, say 100 acres, and employs three men, and more in harvest. Well, all the riches he has in the world, and payment of interest for his capital, and losses, and risk, and amusement, and support, and education of family, all come out of these three workmen's labour—nothing else. If I had not been asked to deal rudely with the subject, I should have shown the facility with which more, much more than twice as much, may be made of three acres. With the means I propose of making mauure, together with parings of walks and a trench here and there burned for ashes, your three acres would be like a dunghill. Now, to make all simple, I will deduct £14 from the £44 profit, and leave it at £30 a-year after living, and we come to the conclusion that in seven years a man, from 157 days' work a-year, would realise £210; and we presume his rent of three acres and a house to be £10 a-year, and that the company is bound to sell at 20 years' purchase; and thus I show that, without stint, the occupant can purchase his allotment for ever, and £10 over in seven years. Now, until he purchases his allotment, he will not expend £31 a-year on clothes, hay, and fuel, nor will he consume what I have allowed; so that I repeat what I have many times stated, that in four years from the day of taking possession—allowing the first year for thought and shaking down—that the merest fool will pay for 2, 3, or 4 acres of ground on the company's terms, but not IF DEALING IN THE RETAIL MARKET, NOR YET IN TEN YEARS.

However, to put all beyond dispute, I will try, and all who are neighbours shall bear witness of the fair mode of dealing; and, as I mean to purchase an allotment, I will keep a critical and exact account, and will purchase it out in less than three years, and what I can do in three, others may do in seven. How ridiculous for those to think of talking about the land that know no more about it than the crow that flies over it! Your answer to them must always be—WELL, WHO MAKES FORTUNES FOR FARMERS, AND PAYS ALL THEIR RENTS, AND ALL THE REST OF IT! THE LABOURER! AND NO ONE ELSE.

Your faithful friend and Bailiff,

FEARGUS O'CONNOR.

## NATIONAL LAND COMPANY.

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